

# Monitoring *Marine Debris*



## What is marine debris?

Marine debris is any persistent and solid manmade material that enters the marine environment or the Great Lakes.

## Is marine debris a big problem?

It is a **global** problem affecting everything from the environment to the economy; from fishing and navigation to human health and safety; from the tiniest coral polyps to giant blue whales.

## Why monitor marine debris?

Monitoring programs are necessary in order to compare marine debris abundance, composition, distribution, and movement on regional, national and global scales. Currently a single best method is not available to estimate total densities in the water column, subsurface in the water, and on the shore.



## What is the NOAA Marine Debris Program doing?

The NOAA Marine Debris Program is **developing and testing** a scientific monitoring and assessment protocol. This protocol takes a holistic approach by incorporating several types of data collection including:

- Shoreline assessments for coastal debris
- Coastal/open ocean surface water debris trawls
- Future data collection will include:
- Sediment samples to analyze for micro-debris items
- Underwater assessments for benthic debris



[www.MarineDebris.noaa.gov/  
projects/monitoring.html](http://www.MarineDebris.noaa.gov/projects/monitoring.html)